



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

BRITISH HONDURAS.

BY

W. L. AVERY.

This colony, which has been developed from the original "settlement" of Belize (a name now applied to the capital only), is the single dependency of Great Britain in Central America, and lies between the parallels of $15^{\circ} 54'$ and $18^{\circ} 30'$ N. lat. and $88^{\circ} 10'$ and $89^{\circ} 9'$ W. longitude. It is about 900 miles south of New Orleans and 600 miles west of Jamaica. It contains, with the adjacent cays, an area of 7,562 square miles, or nearly the area of New Jersey. It is bounded on the north by the River Hondo, which thus separates it from the State of Yucatan. On the south the Sarstoon river divides it from Guatemala. On the east the boundary is the Caribbean Sea, and the western boundary is the Republic of Guatemala. The seaboard extends for 180 miles, and the long line of cays provides a breakwater so entirely effective that no gale from the East or the dreaded northers are ever felt on its shores. The surf may break with great force on these cays, but the inner waters are ever calm, or comparatively so. South of Belize every river mouth or "bar" is the place of a settlement either of a few huts or a considerable village. The geographical features of the northern and southern halves are entirely different. The northern half is generally flat, with a slight incline from the western frontier to the sea—virtually a plain of some 1,000 square miles. The southern half is entirely different, having the range of the Cockscomb Mountains, beginning at the Sibun and running south, with the highest peak some 3,700 feet above the sea-level. The western portion of this southern half is undulating, grassy country, with fine pasturage lands, and is uninhabited; but some gold-bearing quartz has been reported, as well as indications of other minerals. As there are no wagon-roads in the colony, all transportation must depend on the sea and the many rivers. The river-system is extensive, and the streams, running as they do from west to east every few miles, with their windings, afford the means of traffic to all necessary points in the interior. They are generally of a depth of six or eight feet, with very few rapids. The Hondo, on the north, is navigable for large boats—not vessels—for 50 miles from its mouth. The New river (I am giving them from north to south) flows parallel with the Hondo, and can be navigated for 70 miles. The Belize river is the longest in the colony, and, rising in the Blue Mountains of

Guatemala, it follows a very tortuous course of 150 miles—twice the length in a straight line from its source to its mouth. With a depth from 6 to 9 feet and an average width of 140 feet, it forms the great highway or waterway of British Honduras. There is a necessary portage at the Falls of Roaring Creek. The Falls are only 10 feet in height, but their charm consists in their surroundings. They are in a high defile, which, from the water's edge to the summit, is covered with a wealth of vegetation unknown outside of the tropics. The majestic mahogany, towering 100 feet skyward, the giant cotton tree with its far-spreading buttresses, the waving bamboo with its feathery leaves, and the dense and beautiful smaller growths, with the perfectly clear water tumbling brightly through its channel, make a scene well worth a few days' trip to see. The Sibun river enters the sea ten miles south of Belize after passing through a somewhat hilly country. The Manatee river, 25 miles south of Belize, is narrower than the others, and the bar at the mouth is the roughest in the colony. Some miles from its mouth a remarkable stoppage occurs, the river being there supplied from an underflowing body of water—a stream flowing through a narrow cave of a mile in length. Mahogany is still floated down, however, though at flood-time it is a dangerous venture. The Mullins river is navigable some 30 miles from its mouth, and is very deep and slow-flowing, with most of the valley under banana and plantain cultivation. The Sittie river is by far the prettiest, though the rapids some twenty miles from its mouth make it perhaps the least useful. The scenery is so essentially tropical and wonderfully beautiful that the tediousness of its difficult navigation is forgotten. The Southern Stann Creek river rises in the mountains and flows through a country rich in game; but its navigation is slow and uncertain, the stream being obstructed with rocks and boulders, and Chase Falls and Big Falls adding to the difficulty while enhancing the beauty. Twenty miles further south is Monkey river, a stream which 12 miles from its mouth is a deep and narrow creek. The next water-course is Deep river, which is formed by the uniting of four creeks of equal size 12 miles from its mouth. Deep river boasts a "boiling spring" of hot water impregnated with sulphur and iron, and with a temperature of 84°. Lying between Deep river and the Sarstoon are Golden Stream, Middle River, Rio Grande, Rio Moho, and Rio Tomash, all flowing through a country entirely undeveloped and practically uninhabited. I have enlarged on the river-system because it renders possible the development of agricultural industries, and with the coming of the railway it settles forever any question of efficient transportation.

The towns of British Honduras are Belize, Corosal, Stann Creek, Punta Gorda, and Orange Walk. The first recorded mention of a settlement at Belize was in 1638, when a few mariners and adventurers formed the nucleus of what has become entirely a wood-cutting and trading community. At first a settlement, then a superintendency, later a dependency of Jamaica, in 1884 a full Crown colony was established, and Belize is its capital. All the public buildings are situated here, and it is the chief city as well as the capital. Corosal, the second town in importance, is situated almost on the extreme north of British Honduras, eight miles from the Mexican boundary, and, unlike Belize, it is high above the water-level, on the edge of the largest plain in Central America. This town is of Spanish origin, as is proved by the records of the refugees from Yucatan who settled it and from the general plan of the laying out, with a plaza in the centre about 100 yards square, with the Roman Catholic church facing it on one side, and the streets running at right angles, unlike any of the other towns in the colony. The people, too, are unlike the other inhabitants of the more southern districts. Stann Creek is built along the shore for over a mile, and the beach is dignified by the title of the "Marine Parade"—for its people consider it the Brighton of the colony. It is the one town that does not depend on the rainfall for its water supply, as a clear, pure stream flows through it. The inhabitants, some 2,500, are largely of Carib origin, and rely for their support on the sale of fruit to the steamers. Punta Gorda, elevated about twelve feet above the water, is also built along the water front for some three-quarters of a mile. Here is located a small community of citizens of the United States, who coming there shortly after the Civil War and engaging in sugar-making and cane-planting have made a success of it, and only lack capital to make it an immense enterprise. The sugar is wonderfully rich in quality, and the example of these honest Southerners will lead to a great development of the industry in the future. There are 12 sugar mills and over 1,000 acres under cane. The undulating grass lands in the vicinity of Punta Gorda, with here and there a noble tree, give the landscape a park-like appearance very agreeable to the English eye.

The coast of this colony is well lighted. And, indeed, it needs to be; for though the weather is ever clear, the uncertain but very powerful currents along the shores and among the cays render good lights necessary, for the great essential of the navigator—viz., experience—counts for little when the force and direction of the current is unknown.